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Assessing changes in preschoolers' home learning environment following the Early Words Together programme

Submission date	Recruitment status	[ ] Prospectively registered
27/02/2018	No longer recruiting	[ ] Protocol
Registration date	**Overall study status**	[ ] Statistical analysis plan
07/10/2019	Stopped	[ ] Results
Last Edited	**Condition category**	[ ] Individual participant data
21/11/2022	Other	[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

This study aims to explore the Home Learning Environment (HLE) in disadvantaged homes and the extent to which it can be subject to change, using an early years parent and child engagement programme (Early Words Together) as a catalyst for change. Early Words Together (EWT) consists of six one-hour one-to-one or small group (e.g. 2-3 parents) sessions with parents and their children to increase children's communication, language and literacy skills by improving family engagement and facilitating change in the HLE. The programme has previously been shown to impact on children's language and literacy skills but has not been subject of a randomised controlled trial (RCT). This pilot RCT is the next step in building the programme's evidence base in accordance with the Early Intervention Foundation's levels of evidence.

Who can participate?

Twelve settings will be recruited across three geographical locations. Settings will be eligible to participate if they have not previously delivered EWT and:

1. Are located in one of the 25% most deprived Local Authorities in England (using Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015)
2. Have more than 40% of children registered as eligible for Pupil Premium
3. Respond to an invitation from the research team and are willing to take part
4. Can demonstrate good levels of parental engagement to ensure viable numbers for recruitment and retention to the study, and, if randomised to the intervention group, programme delivery (e.g. through attendance at parent meetings and events etc)
5. Are willing to support the intervention.

Study participants will be recruited from parents of children aged 3-4 in Foundation 1 classes in recruited pre-school settings.

What does the study involve?

Settings will be randomly allocated to one of two groups: either the intervention group or the control group. Settings in the intervention group will receive training in the programme. Parents in the intervention group will receive the EWT programme over a six-week period through their pre-school setting. Parents in the control group will continue with practice as usual, but will

receive £5 of high street vouchers for participating in each round of data collection. All parents will complete a demographic questionnaire at point of recruitment. Intervention parents will complete the Home Environment Questionnaire (HEQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) two weeks before programme delivery and again six months after the initial administration. At this stage they will also be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the programme. The intervention children will be administered the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) at the same time points. Alongside this, a subsection of these parents and their children who have consented will undertake a home observation at two weeks before programme delivery and six months later. Parents in the control group will complete the questionnaires (HEQ & ASQ) and (where applicable) the home observation and their children will be administered the BPVS at timepoints to match those of the intervention group.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The researchers anticipate the main benefits to be an enhanced HLE, resulting in a significant improvement in child language outcomes for those in the intervention group. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in the programme given positive outcomes in previous studies.

Where is the study run from?
The study will be in selected settings in Doncaster, Rotherham and Bradford.

When is study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2017 to July 2020

Who is funding the study?
The Nuffield Foundation

Who is the main contact?
Dr Louise Tracey
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Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Assessing changes in preschoolers' home learning environment following the Early Words Together programme

Study objectives
The aim of this study is to explore the Home Learning Environment in disadvantaged homes and the extent to which it can be enhanced, using an early years parent and child engagement programme (Early Words Together) as a catalyst for change

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 21/09/2017, Education Ethics Committee University of York (Department of Education D/P/202B, Derwent College, University of York, York, YO10 5DD, UK; +44 (0)1904 324476; education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk) ref: 17/23

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Two-arm between setting pilot randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Home Learning Environment, children's language acquisition

Interventions
Settings (pre-schools) are randomly allocated to intervention or control conditions. Randomization will be at the setting-level to reduce the possibilities of diffusion which could occur with an in-school design. Schools were stratified by region (Doncaster, Rotherham, Bradford) and then randomised using minimisation on a 1:1 allocation within region. Randomisation was conducted and recorded using MinimPy software (Saghaei & Saghaei, 2011).
1. Teachers in Foundation 1 receive 1 day of CPD and co-ordinate the delivery of the six-week Early Words Together programme to participating parents and their 3-4-year-old children by volunteers. Programme to be delivered in successive waves to different cohorts of participants over 4 academic terms (Summer 2018-Summer 2019).
2. Teachers in the control condition continue with usual practice.

Parents complete a bespoke demographic questionnaire on recruitment.
The intervention children will be administered the BPVS-III approximately two weeks prior to programme delivery and again, six months after the initial administration. Intervention parents will complete the HEQ and ASQ at the same time points. Alongside this a subsection of these parents and their children who have consented to a substudy will undertake a home observation.

A similar proportion of control children and their parents will be randomly selected at each wave of delivery to be assessed at the same time points (two weeks prior to intervention programme delivery and six months later).

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
Child primary outcome measure:
Receptive vocabulary measured using the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS-III; Dunn, Dunn and NfER, 2009)

Parent primary outcome measure:
Home Learning Environment measured using the Home Environment Questionnaire (HEQ; Miser and Hupp, 2012). It includes items which relate to resources available in the home, home academic activities, and outside the home activities.

Each of these measures is administered prior to programme delivery (or equivalent time period for control families) and six months after the pre-test. The programme was designed to be delivered each half term during the period of the study. So, for example, for intervention participants receiving programme delivery in the second half term of the Summer Term 2018 the pre-test occurred in May 2018 and the post-test in November 2018. Control families were randomly selected to act as though receiving the programme during that time period and pre- and post-tested at the same timepoints.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Child's communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving, and personal-social skills, measured using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire®, Third edition (ASQ®-3) (Squires and Brickers, 2009)
2. Quality of parent-child social interactions with a focus on verbal behaviours, measured using the home observation measure, administered to a sub-sample of participants, adapted from the Play and Reading Observation Tool (PAROT; Pye, 2015) and the Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding Scheme (DPICS; Robinson and Eyberg, 1981)

Each of these measures is administered prior to programme delivery (or equivalent time period for control families) and six months after the pre-test. The programme was designed to be delivery each half term during the period of the study. So, for example, for intervention participants receiving programme delivery in the second half term of the Summer Term 2018 the pre-test occurred in May 2018 and the post-test in November 2018. Control families were randomly selected to act as though receiving the programme during that time period and pre- and post-tested at the same time points.

Completion date
31/07/2020

Reason abandoned (if study stopped)
Participant recruitment issue

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

The settings selected will not have previously delivered the Early Words Together programme. The target sample will be drawn from a population of parents with children aged 3 to 4 years old who attend one of the 12 settings recruited to the study (6 settings per area). Settings will be included if they:

1. Are located in one of the 25% most deprived Local Authorities in England (using Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015)
2. Have more than 40% of children registered as eligible for Pupil Premium
3. Respond to an invitation from the research team and are willing to take part
4. Can demonstrate good levels of parental engagement to ensure viable numbers for recruitment and retention to the study, and, if randomised to the intervention group, programme delivery (e.g. through attendance at parent meetings and events etc.)
5. Are willing to support the intervention

All parents (primary caregivers) who have the main responsibility of a child aged 3 to 4 years who is attending one of the settings recruited to take part in this study will be eligible for the study, alongside their child.

Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
168

Key exclusion criteria
1. Settings who have implemented the programme previously
2. Parents who are unable to commit to the six-week programmne

Date of first enrolment
25/09/2017

Date of final enrolment
31/10/2018

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
University of York
Berrick Saul Building
York
United Kingdom
YO31 7TU

Study participating centre
National Literacy Trust
68 South Lambeth Road
London
United Kingdom
SW8 1RL

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of York

ROR
https://ror.org/04m01e293

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Nuffield Foundation

Alternative Name(s)
NuffieldFound

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

It has been planned that anonymised data will be deposited in the UK Data Archive (https://www.data-archive.ac.uk/). It is planned to be available from 2021. Informed consent was obtained from participants at recruitment to the evaluation and approved by Education Ethics Committee, University of York.

IPD sharing plan summary

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Other files	Description of the project and lessons learned	01/04/2021	21/11/2022	No	No